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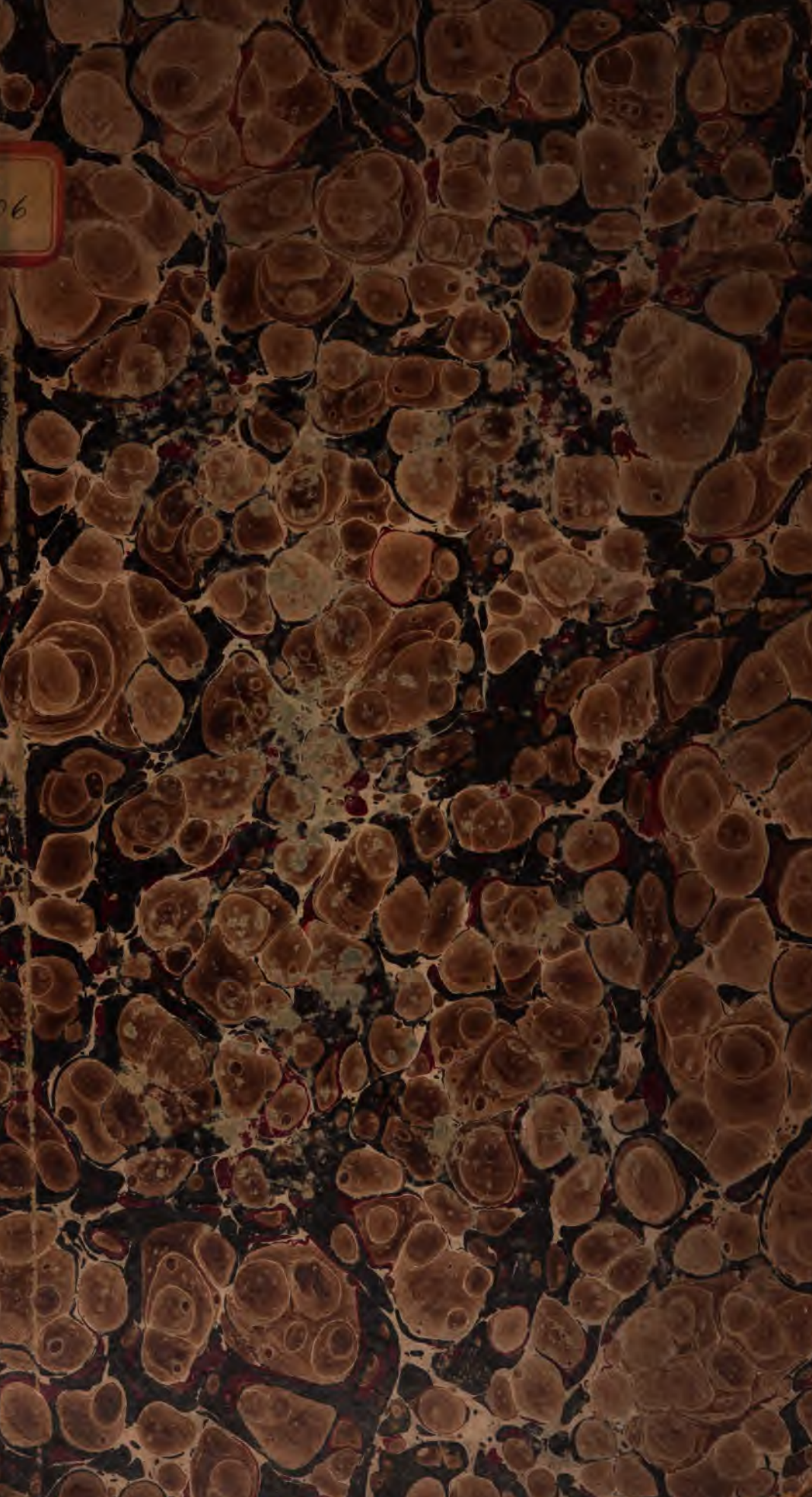
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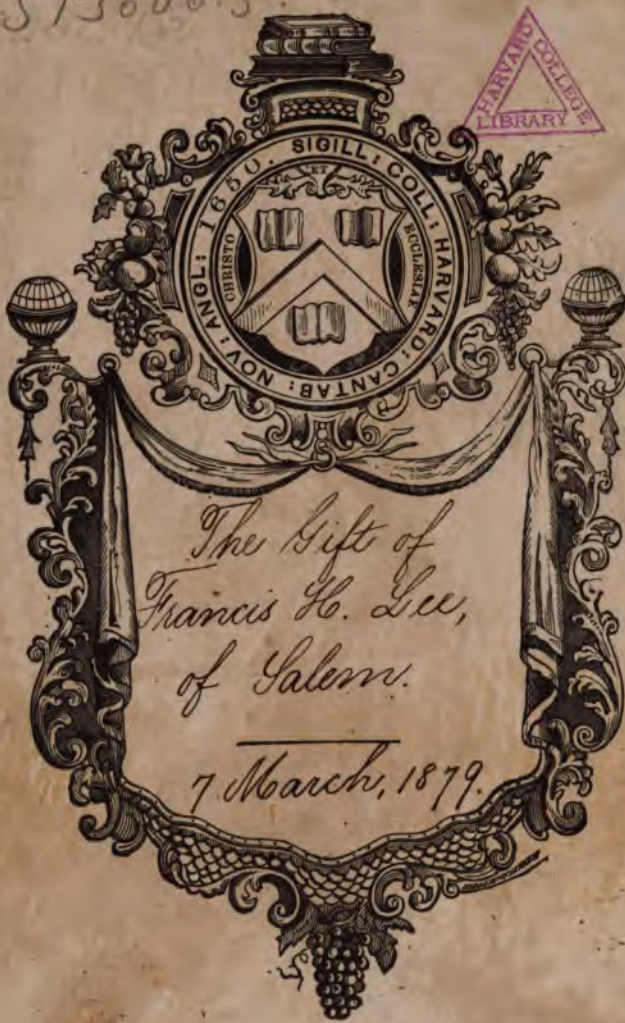
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The Gift of
Francis H. Lee,
of Salem.

7 March, 1879.

Harvard College Librarian
with the regards of Francis H. Sa

MEMORIAL

OF

JOHN CLARKE LEE,

BY

REV. E. B. WILLSON.

[From the ESSEX INSTITUTE HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS, Vol. XV, Nos. 1 and 2.]

SALEM:
PRINTED AT THE SALEM PRESS.
1878.

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College
Library

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Edmund Burke
REV. E. B. WILLSON.

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SALEM:
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Gift of

Francis K. Lee,

of Salem.

MEMORIAL OF JOHN CLARKE LEE.

COMMUNICATED BY REV. E. B. WILLSON.

WHEN a biographer thinks to make the subject of his pen more illustrious by building a lofty pedestal of ancestral honors on which to exhibit him to better advantage, if the figure to which it is designed thus to lend distinction is of but the common size, the effect is disappointing.

But no man is wholly accounted for, or known as well as he can be, who is studied apart from the genealogical tree on which he grew. We have welcomed to this paper some personal sketches and notices of a few of Mr. Lee's relatives of earlier generations, not with the thought of setting him at a higher elevation thereby, though he was of a stature to justify high placing, but because they show him more fully; and show that more than one salient trait in his character started some way back, and has come through long and deep channels.

The Lees of this line appear to have been from the first American forefather known to us, down to the subject of this notice, a people with a positive flavor, in whom was a strong individuality of character; not rounded and toned to a conventional and commonplace type, yet very genuine withal, and without affectation of eccentricity.

That this strain of stout and relishable individuality still persists, no more felicitous proof could be given than the appreciative characterization of some of them, and of Mr. John C. Lee in particular, by a kinsman, which we are permitted to place before the reader farther on in this memoir.

We count ourselves happy that we can present this portrait of the friend we commemorate, drawn in such distinct and lifelike lines, such outstanding features, by one who knew him long and well, and understood his make by fellow feeling; one moreover who possesses in rare degree the gift of terse and graphic expression, as well befitting the subject as it is illustrative of one of the natural endowments of more than one of the Lee family.

In so far as this delineator draws, we may withhold our own hand. But before we introduce this sketch of the man, it is fitting that we take some notice of the boy who preceded and foretold him; that we outline the life historically; and that we name here and there an outspoken and unavoidable quality of his personality, though it is to be touched again by the other and more ingenious hand.

The homes of this family, in America, it may be mentioned, have been chiefly in and about Boston. But their enterprise contributed its full share to the commercial activity and prosperity by which Essex County attained its well earned fame for hardy courage, good seamanship and quick-witted seizure of opportunities leading to affluence some generations ago.

It requires but a few dates and a short narrative to tell what there is to tell of the main facts in the life of Mr. Lee. He was not a public man. He sought none of the offices and honors which most men covet: such as would naturally and easily have fallen to one of his abilities, integrity and large qualifications for public service, if he had desired and sought them. He had his ambitions, and they were high: higher than "care of prince's ear or vulgar breath." So his name was not much on the tongues of the multitude, nor did the newspaper paragraphist announce his going and coming: He liked to have it so.

Being such as he was, however, we have the fewer incidents to record to the lengthening of his biography. He was moreover not given to much mention of himself, and except with a few intimate friends, the contemporaries of his early years, seldom called up in the free fond way common with men in mature life, the scenes and incidents of childhood. For this reason in part it is, also, that the materials for a sketch of his younger boyhood and its training are meagre.

He was born April 9th, 1804, in Tremont Place, Boston.¹ His father, Nathaniel Cabot Lee, was in failing health at the time this son and only child was born, and went not long after, accompanied by his wife, to the West Indies in hope of benefit from a change of climate, leaving his infant son in the care of a trusty nurse in Beverly. The father died in Barbadoes, Jan. 14, 1806, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, the son being at the time less than two years old. The mother, Mary Ann (Cabot) Lee, a cousin of her husband, after a second marriage with Francis Blanchard, Esq., of Wenham,² died July 25, 1809. John Lee was thus left without father or mother at the age of five years. Of the seven years following the death of his mother, that is, of the period between the ages of five and twelve years, precise dates

¹ Not the place now so called, but a court opening out of Tremont Street nearly opposite to King's Chapel, about where the store of Houghton & Dutton, numbered 55 on that street, now stands: known for a time as Phillips Place.

² Francis Blanchard studied law with Judge Charles Jackson (S. J. C.), and afterwards was his partner in law business. He married the widow of Nathaniel C. Lee, Aug. 29, 1808, who at her death in 1802, left a daughter, Eliza Cabot Blanchard, born May 27th, 1809. This daughter married Robert C. Winthrop, March 12th, 1832, and died June 14, 1842, leaving three children. They are all living. Francis Blanchard died at Wenham of consumption, June 26th, 1813, "having been distinguished for his good sense and legal acquirements, which were considered very extraordinary for his age." His daughter was taken into the family of her father's uncle, Samuel Pickering Gardner, in November, 1814, where she remained till her marriage.

cannot be given. The time was divided principally between Wenham and Duxbury. Early within the period named, a winter, perhaps more, was passed in Salem with his great-grandmother, Mrs. Sarah (Pickering) Clarke, widow of Captain John Clarke,³ and sister of the distinguished Colonel Timothy Pickering. While living with Mrs. Clarke he attended the noted school of Miss Hettie Higginson. With this grandmother's mother, he was heard to say in the latter part of his life, he was in communication with one who had seen and remembered some of the actors in the witchcraft tragedies of the seventeenth century.

In Wenham he lived in the family of the Rev. Rufus Anderson;⁴ and he used to refer to this portion of his life, in after years, as a time of which he had the happiest recollections. The family of Col. Timothy Pickering then resided in Wenham, and his grandsons, Charles and Edward, sons of Timothy Pickering, jr., were living with their grandfather. John Lowell Gardner, son of Samuel Pickering Gardner, was also a frequent visitor there, passing his vacations with his grandmother who had a farm in that part of Wenham bordering upon Hamilton. To both

³ Mr. Lee took his name from the Rev. John Clarke, D. D., minister of the First Church in Boston, who was the son of John, and Sarah (Pickering) Clarke, above named.

⁴ Rev. Mr. Anderson was the son of James and Nancy (Woodbury) Anderson, and was born at Londonderry, N. H., March 5th, 1765; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1791; studied his profession with his brother-in-law, Rev. Joseph McKeen of Beverly, first president of Bowdoin College; married, 1st, Sept 8th, 1795, Hannah, second daughter of Col. Isaac Parsons of New Gloucester, Me.; she died July 14, 1803; married, 2d, May 27, 1804, Elizabeth Lovett of Beverly, who survived him; ordained at North Yarmouth, Me., Oct. 22, 1794; dismissed Sept. 1804; installed at Wenham, July 10, 1805; dismissed on account of ill health in 1810; died at Wenham Feb. 11, 1814. His ancestors were among the Scotch Irish who came from the north of Ireland and settled at Londonderry; they came as early as 1725. His maternal ancestor was John Woodburn, his paternal ancestor, John Anderson. Rev. Rufus Anderson of the "A. B. C. F. M." is his son.

these families John Lee was nearly related.⁵ The three boys named were of about his own age, and were his daily companions. With them he ranged the fields, explored the woods, and felt the charm of out-door life, enjoying with zest the sports of a free and healthy childhood, taking impressions which lasted through life, and which he ever recalled with pleasure. The picture of that careless time and country life, when in bare-footed⁶ freedom he scoured the neighborhood with his associates on such business and adventure as invite enterprising country boys abroad, was one which he kept fresh in memory when years and cares had thickened upon him. Here, no doubt, were developed the beginnings of that hearty love of nature and taste for rural occupations, especially for botanizing, horticulture and arboriculture, which became sources of great delight, and at times of constant employment in subsequent years.

Those who remember him as he then was describe him as large for his age, active, strong, rather shy of strangers, somewhat headstrong and hard to manage, and one "who would not tell a lie." If a little troublesome to his elders sometimes, sincere and to be trusted in his speech, and so attaching to himself his youthful companions as never to lack a loyal attendance and sufficient support in whatever expeditions and achievements were set afoot; from an early age, says one, an athletic and easy swimmer.

We are fortunately able to add some interesting remi-

⁵ Mrs. Sarah (Pickering) Clarke, great-grandmother of John C. Lee, Mrs. Elizabeth (Pickering) Gardner, grandmother of John L. Gardner, and Col. Timothy Pickering, grandfather of Charles and Edward Pickering, were sisters and brother: daughters and son of Timothy and Mary (Wingate) Pickering of Salem.

⁶ When Mr. Lee recalled these days he did not omit to mention the going bare-footed. It was not a habit with him, doubtless, as it was generally with the boys of the town. It is likely that the novelty of it as an exceptional license made it a more lively recollection afterwards.

niscences of this time from each of these two,—life-long friends of Mr. Lee,—who survive him.⁷

"You are right," says Mr. John L. Gardner, "in supposing that our early rambles in Wenham were favorable to the cultivation and improvement of his natural liking for the wonders of animal and vegetable life, for our companion was Charles Pickering, a born naturalist, who seemed instinctively to know all the habits and resorts of all flying and creeping things, and has since become one of our most distinguished men of science; and John C. Lee was always noted for his habit of accurate observation."

"As you have known him as a man, so he was as a boy, sturdy and upright. I have never known him unreasonable, nor have I ever seen him give way to fits of passion, as was often the case with other boys."

"In placing John C. Lee under the charge of Rev. Mr. Anderson," writes Dr. Charles Pickering, "his relations were desirous that he should not know of his large expectations, fearing that such knowledge might have an injurious effect upon his character. The secret was well kept by us boys, and I do not think he became aware of his pecuniary resources until nearly or quite grown up."

"Our boyish excursions, when out of school, were usually planned beforehand, and besides exploring the hills, woods, streams, lakes, and morass of that diversified district, included fishing and I am sorry to say ornithological pursuits, we being as yet too young to be trusted with fire-arms. On one occasion J. C. Lee gave chase to, but fortunately did not overtake an 'unknown animal,' a wild

⁷ Unhappily, before these sheets go to the printer it becomes necessary to modify this sentence. His two friends survived him, indeed, but one of the two has since followed him. On the 17th of March, 1878, Dr. Charles Pickering, the distinguished naturalist, died in Boston after a brief illness.

cat." "Before we left Wenham, three other boys became old enough to sometimes join in excursions, John and Henry W. Pickering, and George Gardner;⁸ and all seven were living in the beginning of 1876."

"J. C. Lee grew up always frank and open, ready to give his opinion if he had formed one."

His life in Wenham must have ended in February, 1814, or before, as the Rev. Mr. Anderson died in that month.

It is probable that it was about that time that he was transferred to the family of the Rev. Dr. Allyn of Duxbury, where he remained till he came to Salem to live in the early part of 1816. We are indebted to his friend, Mr. Gardner, for all that we know of his school-days in Duxbury; and though the description given of the life there by his school-fellow affords us no particular incidents of a personal nature in his history, it presents a pleasant picture of the circumstances and influences under which his training went on.

"You are right," says Mr. Gardner, "in your inference that J. C. Lee left Wenham before February, 1814. I was sent to Duxbury also in May, 1814, and continued there till October of that year, when I was removed after partially recovering from a dangerous illness. As well as I can recollect John Lee had been established there for some time before I went, and continued there after my departure. It is not unlikely that he was put there soon after the death of his step-father in June, 1813."

"Our life at Duxbury was a very happy one. Dr. Allyn was an eccentric but a most good natured and ex-

⁸ John and Henry White Pickering, sons of John Pickering, were cousins of Charles and Edward, and George Gardner was a brother of John L. Gardner. The excursions for which they were old enough must have been at times when John Lee visited Wenham, after leaving Mr. Anderson's. John Pickering was born Nov. 8, 1806, Henry W., May 27, 1811, and George Gardner Sept. 15, 1809.

cellent personage.⁹ The boys always addressed him as uncle. When exchanging with the neighboring ministers he was in the habit of taking one of the boys with him ; and to insure his good behavior took him into the pulpit with him. I shall always remember my assisting in this way at the neighboring town of Scituate. Mrs. Allyn was of the old Plymouth stock of Bradford. Most of our discipline came from the Doctor's oldest daughter, Miss Abby Allyn, a fine intelligent woman who afterwards married the Rev. Convers Francis, brother of Mrs. L. M. Child.¹⁰

"So pleasant were the impressions made by our residence at Duxbury that in our early married days J. C. Lee and I took a horse and vehicle and passed a day or two in exploring our old haunts."

At the age of twelve John Lee was placed by his guardian, Judge Charles Jackson,¹¹ in the family of his relative, John Pickering, the distinguished philologist, then living in Salem, where he found a congenial and happy home during the rest of his minority. On coming to Salem he entered a private School kept by Abiel Chandler,

⁹ Rev. John Allyn was born at Barnstable, March 21, 1767; graduated from Harvard College, 1785; ordained at Duxbury, Dec. 3, 1788; married Abigail Bradford, daughter of Job and Abigail (Parkman) Bradford, who was born 1765 and died 1839. He died July 19, 1833. See Francis' Memoir in Mass. Hist. Soc. (Collections) 3d series, Vol. V, p. 245; Hist. of Duxbury by Justin Winsor, p. 207.

¹⁰ Convers Francis was born Nov. 9, 1795, in Arlington then called Menotomy, and afterwards West Cambridge. His father Convers Francis, son of Benjamin and Lydia (Convers) Francis, was born in Medford, July 14, 1766, died in Wayland, Nov. 27, 1856, at the age of ninety. His mother was Susannah Rand, daughter of Barrett and Susannah Rand of Charlestown, she died in 1814. C. F. graduated at Harvard College in 1815,—ordained at Watertown June 23, 1819; married May 15, 1822, Miss Abby Bradford Allyn, daughter of Rev. Dr. Allyn of Duxbury: resigned his charge at Watertown, Aug. 21, 1842, and at the beginning of the month following entered upon the professorship of Pulpit Eloquence and Pastoral Care in the Divinity School at Cambridge made vacant by the death of Rev. Henry Ware, jr. He died on the seventh of April, 1863. See Memoir by Rev. William Newell in Proceedings of Mass. Hist. Society, 1864-5, p. 233.

¹¹ Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, who married a younger sister of his father.

and afterwards by John Brazer Davis, and under these two masters he was fitted for Harvard College, entering in 1819.

A short time before commencement in 1823 a large part of his college class became highly incensed towards a member charged with informing against, and falsely accusing the person on whom the highest honors of the class had justly fallen, and by whose disgrace and dismissal the informer himself would come into the forfeited honors of his supplanted class mate. Feeling ran high against the obnoxious student, and finally against the faculty, when some of the class were expelled for visiting upon the offender such indignities and ostracism as usually follow conviction, or fixed suspicion of this crime. About half the class including many of the older and more influential of its members, after ineffectual remonstrance against the course decided upon by the college officers as unjust, invoked upon themselves the penalties which had been decreed against the chief insurgents. John Lee ranked in the list of the latter, it is presumed, and fairly enough, for he had not concealed nor denied his full participation in the act for which he, with others, was summoned to answer. As years went by, one after another of those who had refused to take their degrees upon the terms prescribed by the college authorities,—word having gone out meantime that they would be given upon an intimation that they were desired,—signified their wish to be enrolled with the class, and received their diplomas. Mr. Lee, with several others, took his in 1842.

After leaving college he pursued the study of Law for a little while under the direction of John Pickering, Esq., but soon decided that a business career was more to his mind, and formed a partnership with John Merrick, jr., with whom he carried on a mercantile business in Boston

for a few years, probably from 1826 to 1830; for a short time near the end of this connection William Sturgis, jr., was a third partner.

Not long after his marriage he had a fall in his store over a flight of stairs, of which the consequences were severe and lasting; one leg continued through life less sound than its mate. His health at last became so seriously undermined from this cause that he was induced to go upon a Southern journey, and he passed the winter of 1828-9 in the southwest, spending some time in New Orleans, and visiting his grandfather, Francis Cabot, in Natchez, Mississippi, at which place he was then resident.

Mr. Lee's business had not prospered; and though his health was much restored by travelling and wintering amid new scenes and in a bland climate, it had not given him heart to pursue further the struggles and chances of a merchant's life. He determined to quit it. And his next step was to remove to Salem as his place of future residence. This was in 1829. For the first four years he occupied the house now the dwelling of Mrs. Asabel Huntington. In 1834 he completed and occupied the house in Chestnut street in which he passed the remainder of his life. He had already bought a tract of land of several acres in extent on Dearborn street in North Salem which he continued to own and improve till within a few years.

The cultivation of his land was for several years his chief occupation, which he followed with advantage to his health, and in which he found keen enjoyment and had excellent success. He set trees, and raised fruits and flowers, giving personal attention daily to the work. The land, said to have had but one tree upon it when he bought it, has been thickly planted these many years with trees in great variety, both forest and fruit-bearing, foreign and indigenous, set with his own hand, or under his own eye.

He soon became an active member of the Essex County Natural History Society formed in 1833, and united with the Essex County Historical Society in 1848 to form the Essex Institute. He took great interest in its exhibitions of fruits and flowers to which he was one of the largest contributors. Declining its offices of honor and platform duties he accepted that of Vice President which he held for several years, and served upon its committee of finance till his death. He was a working member; sought to awaken interest in others; shed off the discouragements and refused to accept the prophecies of short life to the society with which his request for subscriptions was sometimes met, gave to it himself, carried the subscription paper to others, persevered in finding means of lifting it out of its embarrassments, and only ceased to render it active service when it had become well established; and never to the last lost his interest in it. Such offices as are little sought by competent men, offices of large responsibility and requiring conscientious and pains-taking attention with small compensation or none, were often put upon him and he accepted them; but for presidencies of the various kinds, and such offices as merely conferred distinction and set the official in the public eye he had no desire. Like his forefather, Thomas Lee, of the New Brick Church in Boston—hereafter mentioned—he preferred to let others take the chair, but did not fail to make himself felt both in counsel and action, where executive work called for far-and-wide seeing judgment and prudence in the management of treasuries and investments.

His high ideal of business exactness had small patience with a loose administration of money trusts. Auditing a treasurer's account, and coming upon an item set down as "———, about" a certain amount: "*About!*" said he:

"*About!*" "I don't know what *about* means." He was many years a trustee and officer of the Salem Savings Bank, a director some time in the Exchange Bank, Member and Treasurer of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a director in the Eastern Rail-road Corporation, and represented the town of Salem in the General Court of Massachusetts in the years 1834 and 1835.

In 1848, in connection with Mr. George Higginson, he founded the well known banking house of Lee and Higginson in State street, Boston, where he acquired reputation for sound judgment, financial sagacity, and inflexible probity, giving to his house a high standing in its high class. From this position, in which, perhaps, were best exhibited his financial perspicacity and general excellence of judgment he retired at the end of 1862.

After withdrawing from business he made two visits to Europe with his family; the first in 1869-70 in which he journeyed extensively in Great Britain and on the continent; the second in 1872-3, when his time was passed partly in southern France, but mostly in London and its neighborhood, where he was visiting the family of a daughter, the wife of S. E. Peabody, Esq., a member of the well-known banking house of J. S. Morgan and Company.

Travel was a true recreation and enjoyment to him; and an education as well. He did not make a toil of it, and had no ambition to outdo others in the number of places visited, nor in reaching points commonly unknown, and seeing scenes or objects which others had overlooked. He was a close and intelligent observer; and of men and affairs alike he gathered large stores of information, and formed opinions with sharp insight of character and a just estimate of the significance of events. Said one of his countrymen, a well informed and experienced traveller

who met him in Rome: "I was more than ever before struck with his clear strong sense and observation in the way he spoke of matters in Italy." His penetrating perception went to the substance of things, and was not easily deceived by appearances. While he had special tastes he had a large curiosity for general knowledge, and his conversation showed that he had gathered in many fields. He read much; and he read, as he travelled, with a broad outlook, but not on that account with hazy apprehension and indistinct vision. As he became disengaged from business he passed much of his time with books and periodical literature. His knowledge of geography was particularly extensive and accurate. With his mind stored by reading and observation his conversation was, as it might be expected to be, entertaining and intelligent, and was especially racy when in the company of his more familiar friends he gave free play to his love of humor. One who met him often remarked that he would rather hear Mr. Lee talk of the places he had visited than read any book relating to them. Yet he was not forward, not naturally disposed to lead in conversation; he was more given to asking questions, than to expressing and expanding his own thoughts, and the person questioned might never suspect that upon the very points on which he pushed inquiry he was himself an expert. Though regarded as rather reserved and shut up from easy and free approach by strangers, when travelling, or among people and scenes that were new, he found ready access to persons of all grades of society, and took pleasure in plying them with such pertinent questions as would elicit interesting and instructive facts. And this he did with an unvarying courtesy and kindness of manner which inspired confidence and made every one well disposed to

communicate and free to speak. If he shut up some he knew how to open where he found it an object to enter and explore.

He returned from his last European visit, it was thought, with something less than his former health; still no decided symptoms of disease were noticed till a few months before his death. The last summer (1877) he spent with his family in North Conway, New Hampshire, and entered with moderate freedom and his usual interest into the social life which surrounded him, and made pleasant new acquaintances among the visitors at that favorite summer resort.

From the time of his coming home from Conway in September he was not well, yet not called sick. He walked less, went out more rarely, and before long found the exertion of climbing stairs a burden and a cause of suffering; at other times he had visits of severe pain indicating that all was not right with the heart. On the 13th of November he went out for the last time. He went reluctantly, but in compliance with the advice of his physician, who thought it better that he should take the air if he felt able. After the 16th he did not leave his room. Yet no apprehension of immediate danger was felt. On the 19th about four o'clock in the afternoon, one member of his family only being with him, he suddenly complained of severe pain in the head; but the moment before he had been noticing and remarking upon some small article devised for the comfort of the sick which had been presented to him; his attending daughter saw an instantaneous change in his face, and before other members of his family could be called to his bedside, breath and life had gone.

Mr. Lee was married July 29th, 1826, to Harriet Paine

Rose, daughter of Joseph Warner and Harriet (Paine) Rose. She was born in the (English) West India island of Antigua, Feb. 5th, 1804, her father being of English descent, her mother a daughter of William Paine, M. D., of Worcester, Massachusetts. Of this marriage ten children were born, all of whom but one came to manhood and womanhood, and are still living.

In person Mr. Lee was tall; of large frame; of self-reliant expression and bearing; his look open, manly, and free from traces of self-consciousness; a man to be noticed in any company; assuming nothing, but with the air, ordinarily, of one not too studious of the impression he should make upon others, or of what the world might think of him, so that he had nothing to answer for to himself, and kept his self-respect, as from a clear conscience. Though not by nature what would be called an affable man, possibly, he was frank and direct in manner and speech, polite to such as had any claim upon him, altogether prepossessing to men of like frankness, and to such as set a high value on simplicity and straight forward sincerity of character: one to inspire immediate and perfect confidence that he would meet you and deal with you in all honor, and that you would know no change in him.

We have thus traced the outline of Mr. Lee's life, setting such dates as we could to mark the distances in its outward progress and aspects; barely mentioning besides in passing a few characteristic traits too prominent to escape notice. The following analysis of his character referred to in our opening pages, furnished in answer to our solicitation by Henry Lee, Esq., of Boston, a cousin of John C. Lee, and for many years his associate in business, will be read with interest for its discriminating truth, its economy of words, and the wealth of significance packed in them; as well as for its vivid anecdotes, and sugges-

tive parallels between Mr. John C. Lee and others of his lineage :—

“The features of Mr. John C. Lee were strongly marked, he was like ‘a study in two crayons,’ as the French would say, there was not much shading in his character.

The trait by which he was distinguished, was his honesty and sturdy independence, this flavored his speech and gave character to his opinions and actions.

He was naturally conservative, incredulous of new schemes, more prone to revert to the ways of our forefathers; and his natural aversion to labor and agitation combined with his conservatism to harden him against novel doctrines.

As with his opinions, so with his pursuits, he was independent; a great reader and a lover of nature, his garden and his study were his favorite haunts.

He was too reserved to discourse about his private affairs, too manly to bewail his losses and disappointments, too modest to obtrude his advice or criticisms, too noble to indulge in gossip or detraction. He was deferential to all whose age or character commanded his respect, he was a lover of children and delighted in their company, he was jocose and kindly with his equals, taciturn in the presence of strangers, curt to those whom he disliked—somewhat dictatorial in little matters, in all great concerns he was conciliatory and magnanimous.

He was more generally respected than liked; there were enthusiastic men whom he chilled, ceremonious men whom he annoyed, pretentious men whom he overlooked, mean men whom he slighted.

Such a man is necessarily somewhat isolated, his personality is too defined, ‘he cannot forfeit his individuality to follow in the wake of public opinion, he will not bow down to the great golden image, nor swear allegiance to

my Lord prosperity.' 'All the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.' It is curious to trace the transmission of traits from one generation to another; in this instance the trace is so distinct, that we might say Mr. Lee's peculiarities were generic.

His grandfather's grandfather was one of the congregation of the New North Church in Boston, who aggrieved at the imposition of a colleague pastor against their protest and that of the eight ministers of Boston, and disgusted with the prevarications of the candidate and his desertion of his country parish, quitted their old place of worship, built half at their cost, and founded the New Brick Church.

Another instance of his sturdiness was his suit:—Thomas Lee, merchant, *vs.* Honble. Wait Winthrop, Esqre., and Adam Winthrop, Esqre., for funeral expenses of Martha, widow of Deane Winthrop (grandmother of T. L. by a former marriage).

Undaunted by an unfavorable decision by the Inferior Court of Common Pleas, he appealed to the Superior Court of Judicature, pleading 'that he having advanced it trusting to their honor and justice, especially as the sum was so moderate and reasonable; the plaintiff was obliged and did advance the charge,' and gained his suit against these indebted magnates. By the records of the New Brick (afterwards called the Old North), it appears that Thomas Lee was upon every committee from the foundation, that the entertainments on days of ordination and other church festivals were always held at his house, that after modestly refusing year after year, he was at length prevailed upon to be chairman at their meetings,—that together with Honble. Thomas Hutchinson and three other digni-

taries, 'he was desired to sit in the front as long as he thought proper,' and finally he was thanked by the church for his generous gift of pews, etc.

The obituary of this old ruling elder bears the stamp of truth. July 21, 1766: 'Yesterday morning died Mr. Thomas Lee, in the 94th year of his age, who in the early and active part of life carried on a considerable Trade in this Town, though he deserves to be recorded, rather for the unblemished Integrity of his Dealings, and the exact Punctuality of his Payments, than for the Extent of his Trade, or the length of his life.'

Mr. Lee certainly inherited the modesty, probity and independence of this remote ancestor.

Thomas, the eldest son of the above, graduated at Harvard College, 1722, was bred a merchant; after the death of his first wife, removed to Salem, the home of his maternal ancestors, the Flints,—was married to Lois Orne, d. of Timothy Orne, Esqre., and Lois Pickering 29 Dec., 1737, was sent to the General Court as Representative 1739, 1740, and again in 1747, during which time of service he was placed upon important committees. Felt remarks of him that 'he was entrusted with various duties in town and represented it in the General Court.' He died in service, 14 July, 1747. Like his great-grandfather, Mr. Lee removed from Boston to Salem, was there entrusted with various duties in town, and represented it in the General Court.

Joseph, the second son of old Thomas Lee, H. C. 1729, likewise bred a merchant, was afterwards made judge of the Court of Common Pleas, married a daughter of Lt. Gov. Spencer Phips, had his home and an extensive estate on the Mt. Auburn road, Cambridge, side by side with his brothers-in-law, Lechmere and Vassall; was one of the founders and wardens of Christ Church, and one of the unpopular Mandamus Councillors.

The following obituary notice was inserted in the 'Columbian Centinel,' Boston, Dec. 3, 1802:—

'At Cambridge, on Sunday last, Hon. Joseph Lee, aged 93. During a long life Judge Lee was respected by all who knew him. He was distinguished in society by the manners of a gentleman, and by the habits and principles of an honest, honorable man. He was a kind neighbor, warm and sincere in his friendship. Attached to government from principle, he was a good subject to his king, under whom he executed the duties of an important office with fidelity and honor; and with equal fidelity he adhered to the government of the United States, since the Revolution. In attendance on religious duties he was exemplary, and, amidst the infirmities of age, he has seen with composure the slow approaches of death and fostered not the wish to lengthen the day of sorrow and pain. His funeral will proceed from the place of the decease, this afternoon, at half past 2 o'clock, which his friends and acquaintances are requested to attend without further invitation.'

The points in common between Mr. Lee and his great-uncle, the judge,—are their conservatism, their rigidity of habits, and their possession of and taste for a fair garden.

Mr. Lee's grandfather, Joseph Lee, born in Salem, 22 May, 1744, was by the loss of his father, deprived of the advantage of a College course and forced by narrow circumstances to go to sea.

He, with the Messrs. Cabot, whose only sister Elizabeth he married, removed to Beverly, and after a term of sea-service, carried on an extensive business for many years with his distinguished brother-in-law, the Honorable George Cabot who, as junior, had served him through all the grades from cabin-boy to partner.¹²

¹² The following passage from the lately published biography of Mr. Cabot may certify that the subordinate lost nothing by a lax administration of the captaincy.—E. B. W.

"Not yet seventeen years old, he shipped as cabin-boy in a vessel commanded

Mr. or Capt. Joseph Lee, as he was usually styled, had a great talent for mechanics, especially for ship-building, a numerous fleet designed by him were sent out as privateers during the War of the Revolution, and afterwards to Europe and the East and West Indies. After his retirement from active business the projectors of the Essex Bridge having for some cause lost their engineer, besought Mr. Lee to act in that capacity which he did to their satisfaction, which they testified by the presentation of a silver pitcher (Mr. Lee having refused any compensation), upon which unexpected occasion he is reported to have exclaimed 'that if he had known they would make such d—d fools of themselves he would never have touched their bridge.'

Like many old sea-captains, Mr. Lee took a great interest in his garden not only during his residence at Beverly, but even in his extreme age he could often be seen in the garden of his son-in-law, Judge Jackson, opposite his home in Boston, directing the gardener, or, saw in hand, high on the ladder, pruning or grafting his pear trees.

Early in this century, Mr. Lee and the Cabots moved to Boston where Mr. Lee died on Feb. 6, 1831, aged 87 years.

His character as portrayed by his minister, the Rev. Alexander Young, might be taken, word for word, as the obituary of his grandson:—

'Bred to the sea in early life, Mr. Lee retained in subsequent years the physical and mental vigor which had been developed and nurtured by that perilous mode of

by his brother-in-law, Mr. Joseph Lee. Such a change in his mode of life must have been a sharp one to a young collegian of studious habits; nor was his lot softened by relationship with his captain; for if family tradition may be trusted, Mr. Lee gave his young kinsman the full benefit of severe ship's discipline." *Life and Letters of George Cabot*, by Henry Cabot Lodge, p. 9.

hardy industry. His virtue was of the severest kind. An inflexible integrity, a stern moral principle, an uncompromising adherence to truth and right, regardless of consequences, were its prominent characteristics. Firm, decided, independent, he formed his opinions of men and things for himself, and shaped his actions by his own sense of propriety and duty. Resolute in pursuing his own straight-forward course, he turned aside to interfere with no man's affairs, and would suffer no man to interfere with his. Following the advice of the Apostle, he "studied to be quiet, and to do his own business." Retiring and unobtrusive, he invaded no man's province, encroached upon no man's rights, detracted from no man's character. Though his morality was severe, yet he was neither austere in manner, nor morose in feeling. He would not designedly wound the feelings of the humblest individual, nor do harm to any living thing. Accessible to kindness, he reciprocated it to all who came within the circle of his acquaintance; and manifested, what I consider one of the most delightful traits in old age, an affectionate interest in the concerns and pleasures of his youthful relatives. It is saying much for the goodness of an old man's heart, that children are glad to leave their sports to listen to his kind words and obtain his smile.

Mr. Lee's religious views were sober, rational, liberal. He had great faith in the merit and efficacy of good works, and did not like to hear moral virtue depreciated. He thought, that to benefit mankind was no mean way of serving God, and believed with Jeremy Taylor, that "God is pleased with no sacrifices from below so much as in the thanksgiving songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing and comforted and thankful persons." He conceived that a well-spent life is the best preparation for death, and that a man's religion is of little worth, unless it pervades, elevates and purifies his whole character.

Mr. Lee was a truly benevolent man. Abhorring every thing like ostentation and parade, he threw over his charities the veil of secrecy, and it is only by the disclosures of others that we have been made acquainted

with their variety and extent, as well as with the singular discrimination and delicacy with which they were dispensed. His late munificent donation of twenty thousand dollars to the M'Lean Asylum for the Insane, could not be concealed from the world. It elicited the spontaneous eulogy of the community, has enrolled his name on the list of our public benefactors, and secured for him a place in the grateful remembrance of posterity.

Regular and temperate in all things, Mr. Lee was free, in an unusual degree, from the infirmities incident to old age. Till the day of his decease he retained the vigor and activity of youth. His frame was erect, and his step firm and elastic. The faculties of a strong understanding were unimpaired by the inroads of time or the ravages of disease. He contemplated the approach of death with the composure of a philosopher and the resignation of a Christian. He died, as he wished to die, before in the natural course of things, he should become a burden to himself, or a source of anxiety to his relatives. He died, as he wished to die, suddenly, believing that to the prepared mind the change of worlds cannot be too rapid. He lived useful and beloved, and died respected and regretted, proving both in his life and in his death, that "the hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness."

"Why weep ye then for him, who, having run
The bound of man's appointed years, at last,
Life's blessings all enjoyed, life's labors done
Serenely to his final rest has past;
While the soft memory of his virtues yet
Lingers like twilight hues, when the bright sun is set.

"His youth was innocent: his riper age
Marked with some act of goodness every day;
And watched by eyes that loved him, calm, and sage,
Faded his late declining years away.
Cheerful he gave his being up, and went
To share the holy rest that waits a life well spent."

Mr. Joseph Lee had twelve children, several of whom died in childhood, his daughters all in early womanhood.

All, sons and daughters, inherited their father's masculine strength of mind and simplicity of heart; only two, Mr. Joseph and Capt. George Lee, his talent for naval architecture which they exercised. Commodore Downes informed the writer 'that in the war of 1812 the 'Lee model' was the favorite model in the Navy. None of them had his precision and love of order, and ability to regulate the details of family and business affairs for which he was eminent; all shared his love of nature and skill in gardening, and like their father, the sons were sagacious, enterprising merchants.

Father and sons shunned display, declined public office, finding resources in their books, their gardens and the constant society of a large circle of family and friends.

But while unwilling to take office, or to appear in public, they were interested in all political movements, awake to all public claims to which they responded liberally.

The children were of a more mercurial temperament than their father, had remarkable powers of conversation, full of wit and humor and a corresponding liability to depression; their perceptive faculties were keen, they were alive to all the phenomena of nature, to all the qualities good and bad of their fellowmen, and their frank utterances were not always relished.

President Kirkland, who for a time kept bachelors' hall with three of the Lee brothers, used to say 'that the Lee gentlemen were certainly hypocrites, for they took great pains to conceal their good qualities,' and this habit, due partly to shyness, partly to dread of effusiveness, conduced to a misunderstanding of their character beneath the assumed hardness or bantering.

'There is a sweetish pulpy manner, which I have observed uniformly covers, both in men and women, a

bitter kernel,' and there is a certain crustiness and humorousness which often shelters tender sensibilities, quick sympathies, and there is a certain apparent eccentricity among all original thinkers.

Capt. Joseph Lee was wont to attribute all the Lee peculiarities to the 'Orne kink,' whatever that was.

Of Mr. Nathaniel Cabot Lee, the father of Mr. John C. Lee, I only know that he was a friend of Mr. Francis C. Lowell (one of the founders of our Cotton manufacture), that he was highly esteemed as a man, highly reputed as a merchant, that he was born in Beverly, 30 May, 1772, graduated H. C. 1791, married Mary Ann Cabot, and died in the island of Barbadoes whither he had gone for his health, 14 January, 1806, leaving one only child to whom he willed half of his fortune (a competent one for those days, and large for a young man of 34 to have acquired), deducting some generous legacies to his wife's family. Whether Mr. Nat. Lee (as he was called), possessed the humor and fluent conversational powers of his brothers, I cannot say; his son, Mr. John C. Lee was more reserved and not so sparkling, although by no means deficient in humor."

Mr. Lee's love of children and sympathy with them, and his flow of tender feeling was fully known to but a few who saw him intimately, and in hours of the most private unreserve. In this softness of heart under a manner ordinarily inclined to be impatient with sentimentality, another parallel might be traced with a like undemonstrative sensibility, mostly hidden from observation and unsuspected in earlier men of his family. Anecdotes of too private a nature to be here introduced, could they be given, would movingly illustrate this depth and gentleness of nature, while some of them would, moreover, exhibit a fine sense of honor and rare chivalry of spirit

lying behind the bluff ways and laconic phrase of these men, sometimes thought to "take pains to conceal their good qualities."

The characteristics of Mr. Lee in which he resembled ancestors bearing the same family name with himself have been more fully exhibited because the means of showing them have been at hand. No doubt, if it were possible to trace with an equal research the lineaments of other families from which he descended, equally interesting and authentic likenesses might be designated in a walk through these several portrait galleries. It is impossible at least not to notice that some of his strongest and most individual traits, if mainly derived from Lee ancestors, were signally re-enforced by powerful tributaries which may almost dispute with this, and with each other, the honor of being the main spring. The most casual acquaintance with the Pickerings and Cabots leads up by an open path to the discovery that John Lee's worship of truth, sincerity of speech, squareness of integrity, independence of public opinion, disinterestedness in public service, sensitiveness of honor, decision of mind sometimes accounted obstinacy of prejudice, his love of knowledge and closeness of observation in travel, were the reappearance of what had been noted as characteristic traits in foregoing men and women, of one blood, if not of the same name with himself. Timothy Pickering and George Cabot, to name no others, were men whose history is well known. In their fearless and unflinching adherence to a position once deliberately taken, in the firmness against adverse criticism and influences likely to move men of less nerve, for which they were both distinguished, John Lee showed himself kin to them. When he had deliberated and decided, he was not likely to turn his ear to the public clamor, or, any more, to the surprised objections of his

friends. We recognize the family likeness as we read in the pages of the biographer of Cabot, that: "Among the New Englanders, the men of Boston and Salem, of Marblehead and Newburyport, George Cabot was only one of many whose minds ripened into a peculiar flavor, and grew strong with a robust and masculine vigor, in this school which never failed to leave on its scholars a characteristic stamp of the quarter-deck and a dash of salt water. . . . Mr. Cabot's education . . . was typical of the mode of thought and manner of life which bred up a class of clear-headed, strong-willed, sensible men, at a time when the sentimentalism, which at a later day flooded the country, would have been ruinous. Such education was essentially practical, but its practicality was of that sort which seeks in past experience a guide for future action. The men of that age, while striking out for themselves a new path in a new country, never fell into the mistake of abandoning practice in favor of theory. They may possibly have leaned too strongly in the other direction, but to look at facts as they were was the lesson which their early life had taught them; and if from lack of imagination they went too far in their contempt for theory, at least they understood what they meant, and maintained their own cause with a native shrewdness and tenacity which stamped them as men of a peculiar mould."

Though Mr. Lee was no politician in the common sense of that term, as being in the occupancy of public offices, or in the pursuit of any, or one who by voice or pen sought to guide popular opinion, he was a constant and intelligent observer of public affairs, both state and national, and entertained well considered opinions respecting public men and their policies; opinions which he expressed with unreserved frankness whenever there was occasion. A whig, and inclining to the conservative wing

of that party while it existed, from the time when the mutterings of rebellion began to be heard his mind was made up, and his voice never faltered in the support of vigorous measures for its suppression. He put his substance at the service of his country when the result of the struggle was involved in obscurity; he gave liberally towards the relief and sanitary measures adopted to mitigate the sufferings of the soldiers and their families; and if he left his sons free to decide for themselves whether to enlist in the army, he interposed no word or look to discourage them from such a step. The enlistment and arming of the negroes for the defence of the government met his unhesitating approval.

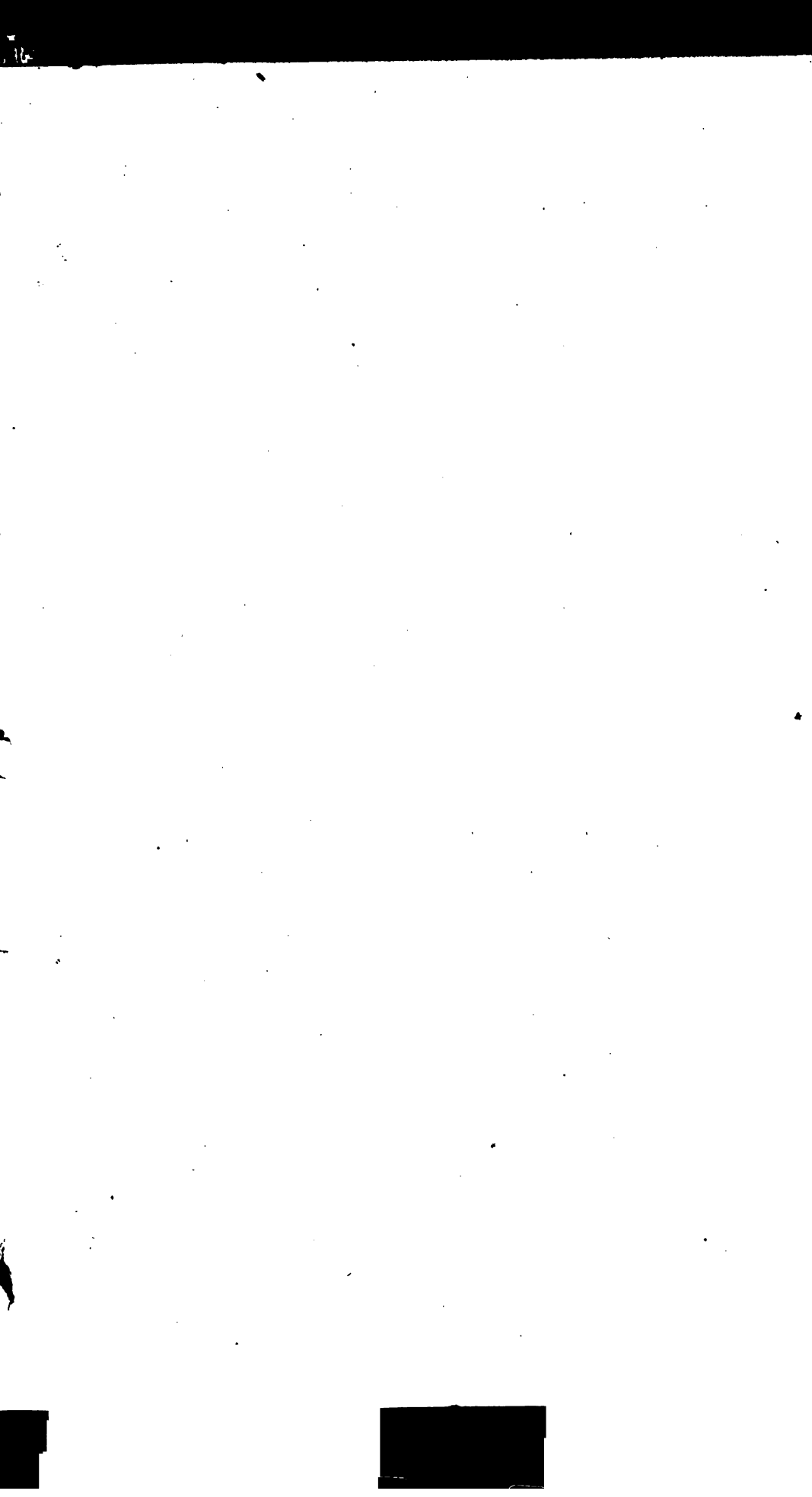
He valued money for its uses; betraying no wish to be ranked with the munificent, he fell behind none in free and judicious giving according to his means for the relief of personal or general necessities, and for the help and encouragement of all efforts and enterprises looking to the public welfare.

Not concentrating his charity in large benefactions on exceptional and isolated cases of calamity, not endowing at long intervals new or old foundations in institutions of learning or charity, he gave to such, if they commended themselves to his judgment, as they needed, and as he was able, while he did not leave unheard, nor turn away unanswered, those less conspicuous and ever besetting appeals which flock to the audience room of listening compassion.

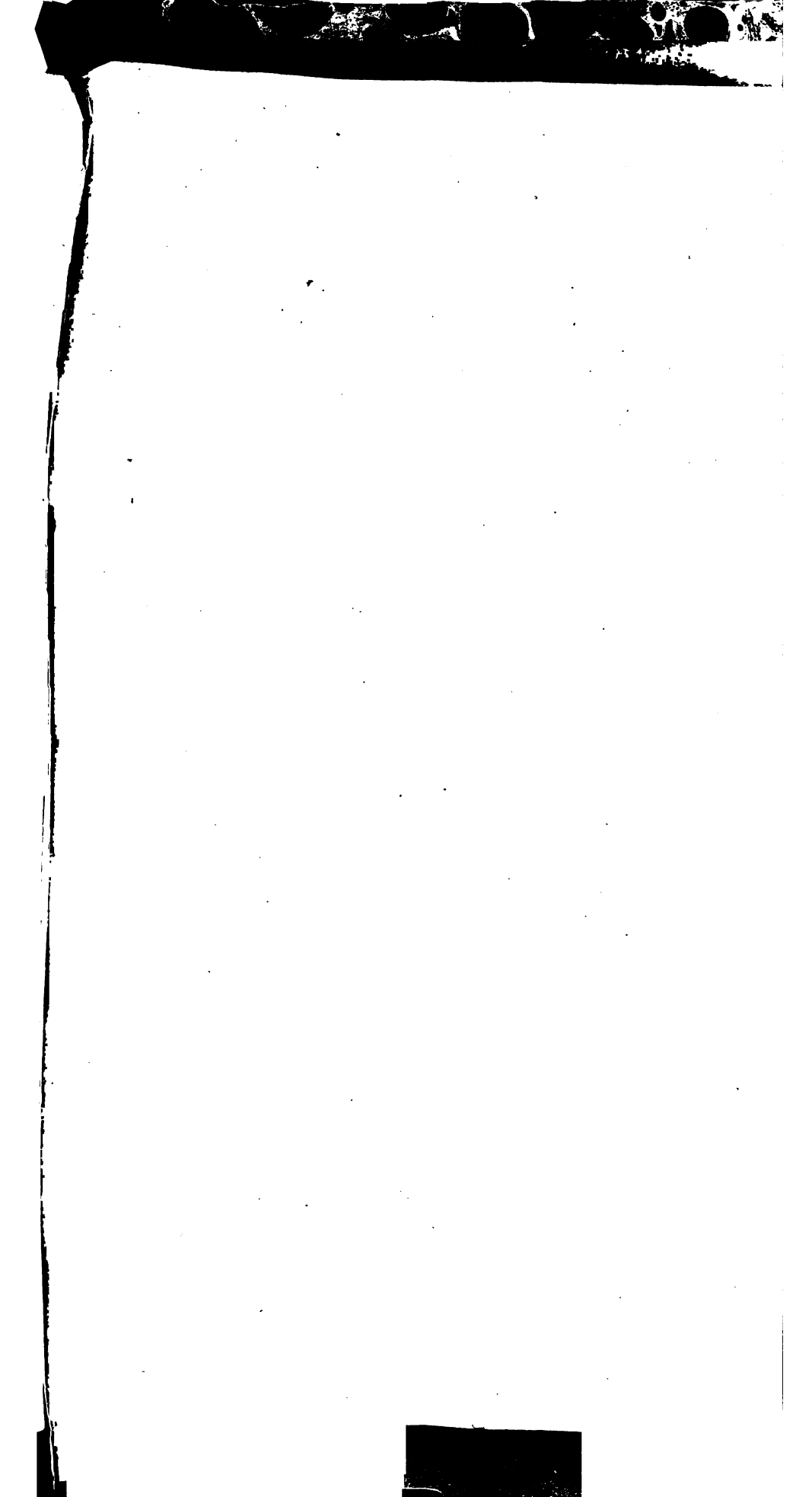
Of religion he had little to say; little even with his most intimate friends and in his hours of greatest freedom of communion. He left others to discuss theology. He valued such discussions and all speculative religion lightly as compared with upright living. Sectarianism found in him no encouragement. He cared little for the extension

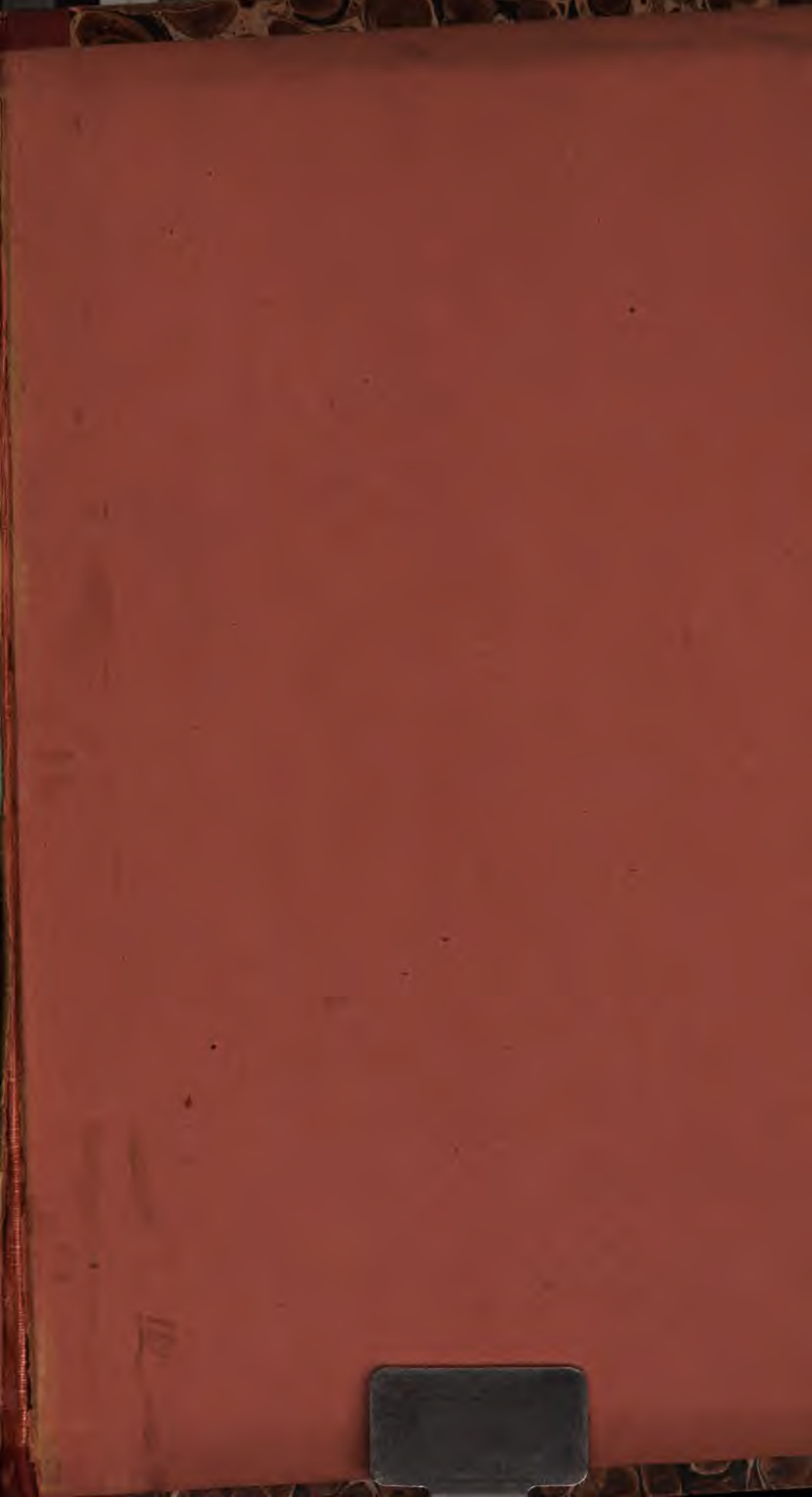
of the denomination to which he belonged, as a denomination. When an appeal was made for money to send books and preachers to disseminate the theological tenets which he had supported all his life, he said: "But why should we try to bring all men to our own belief? Is it certain that they would be better, or happier?" He gave the money; but as if in deference to the judgment of others, and not without some doubt in his own mind as to the wisdom of it.

His doubt was not, however, indifference to religion. He was a steadfast upholder of religious institutions, and believed in the practical lessons of Christian morality and a Christian faith. He was an habitual attendant upon public worship till infirm health interfered with the habit. He was ready to serve upon committees chosen to build a church and to perfect the administration of the parochial system, for whose maintenance he accepted his full share of responsibility. Religion with him took the form in which it was epitomized by the prophet: it was to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God.









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